

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION NATO
INFO USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028676

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, CH

SUBJECT: PRC WARNINGS ABOUT DANGER OF WAR

REF: NATO 606 (NOTAL)

1. PRC PRONOUNCEMENTS OVER THE PAST MONTH OR SO HAVE
PLACED INCREASED EMPHASIS ON THE DANGER OF A WORLD WAR
POSSIBLY OCCURRING IN THE SHORT TERM. THIS WAS MOST
RECENTLY REFLECTED IN CHOU EN-LAI'S REPORT TO THE NATIONAL
PEOPLE'S CONGRESS IN WHICH HE EQUATED THE POSSIBILITIES OF
WAR AND REVOLUTION. IN ADDITION, CHINESE MEDIA, PRO-
VINCIAL RADIOS AND STUDY SESSIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY
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HAVE DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF A WORLD WAR IN TERMS

SUGGESTING THAT A CENTRAL DIRECTIVE HAS BEEN ISSUED ON THE SUBJECT. THE MAIN THEME IS THAT THE TWO SUPERPOWERS ARE BOGGED DOWN IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS AND THUS ARE INCREASINGLY LIKELY TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HEGEMONY. PEKING HAS GIVEN PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE WEST, WHICH IT HAS RECOGNIZED AS THE MOST SERIOUS SINCE THE 1930'S. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE GENERAL WAR THAT IS CURRENTLY PROJECTED AS POSSIBLE DIFFERS FROM THE PAST IN THAT CHINA IS NOT PORTRAYED AS AN IMMEDIATE TARGET OR NECESSARILY A PROTAGONIST. THIS

LOGICALLY STEMS FROM CHINESE COMMENT OVER THE PAST YEAR WHICH HAS STRESSED THAT EUROPE IS THE FOCUS OF SUPERPOWER CONTENTION AND THAT THE MEDITERRANEAN, THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE PERSIAN GULF ARE THE MOST LIKELY AREAS IN WHICH A GENERAL CONFLICT COULD BE IGNITED. DESPITE ORGANIZED DISCUSSION INTERNALLY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUPERPOWER WAR AND PRIVATE COMMENT THAT THE PRC WOULD PROBABLY BE DRAWN INTO ANY WORLD CONFLICT, THERE HAS BEEN NO NOTICEABLE INTENSIFICATION OF WAR PREPARATIONS INSIDE CHINA.

2. PEKING'S INCREASED EMPHASIS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR MAY BE LARGELY PROPAGANDISTIC, INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR WORLD AND DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION TO REFUTE THE IDEA OF US-SOVIET DETENTE. THE CHINESE SEEM ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS TO EXHORT THE WEST EUROPEANS TO GREATER EFFORTS AT UNITY AND DEFENSE. HOWEVER, THE NEW LINE PROBABLY ALSO REPRESENTS A GENUINE ASSESSMENT STEMMING FROM MAO'S OWN STRATEGIC THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRAINS IN THE WEST, CONTINUING ARAB-ISRAELI TENSIONS, AND CONTINGENCIES IN THE BALKANS. PEKING, HOWEVER, IS NOT INDICATING THAT CONFLICT IS NECESSARILY IMMINENT. RATHER, IT IS IMPLYING THAT THE CHANCES OF WAR MAY NOW BE GREATER THAN ANY TIME SINCE 1969 WHEN THE MAIN DANGER RESIDED IN THE PROSPECT OF A SOVIET ATTACK ON CHINA. SOVIET COMMENTARY NOT SURPRISINGLY HAS ACCUSED THE CHINESE OF TRYING TO PUSH MANKIND TOWARD A WORLD WAR.

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.. AZA E AUTHORIZED TO DRAW ON FOREGOING IN
POLAD DISCUSSIONS.

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